Surviving Year One

Tracy Camp
Division of Computer Science

Colorado School of Mines
M.S. vs. Ph.D.?
Networking
Presentation/etc Skills
Preparing Thesis Proposal
Publishing Your Research
Balancing Grad School/Life etc.
Why are you in Grad School?

You can’t get what you came for unless you know what you came for!
To learn how to do research?

How do you learn to do research?

– Meetings with advisor
– Meeting with your lab peers
– Classes
– Going to talks
– Reading papers
To get a good job post-degree?

Figure out which job you really want
- Do internships
- Teach

Figure out how to get skills you’ll need
- Do research (see previous slide)
- Writing
- Public speaking
If you aren’t getting what you need

Sadly this can be common

Common issues
  – Advisor problems
  – You hate your research
  – You hate your group

KEY: find someone to talk to
3 most important people for you?

Graduate Advisor
  – forever linked
  – choose wisely!

You!
  – you have the most to gain/lose

Lori!
Finding an Advisor

- Talk to several potential advisors
- Talk to students who have worked with that faculty member
- Find out how a faculty member’s former students have fared
- Consider funding consequences
  - Not all faculty have funds to support a new student
  - TAs or Fellowships may be available
- If possible, take classes from or do a project with that faculty member
Meeting with your Advisor

• Meet regularly!
• Bring work products to review
• Review accomplishments since last meeting
  – New definitions, classification, related work, understandings, progress on infrastructure, experiments, ….
• Discuss problems and alternatives
  – Show explicit examples
• P4 model
If you are having trouble, what to do?

Don’t ignore it
  – problem will only get bigger
  – early detection is the key

Summarize the facts of the issue
  – discuss facts with trusted friend
  – develop plan to take action
To make most out of grad school, you have to be willing to put yourself out there and be bold.

Don’t be afraid to make yourself look like an idiot.
“I will Survive”

At first I was afraid, I was petrified
Thinking I could never do research, I’d have to hide
I spent so many nights thinking all I did was wrong
I grew strong
I learned how to carry on
Now my groove’s back!
From a dark place.
I just walk in and people leave
with love of my research taste
I have changed the way I work
Now I know that was the key
And I know for just one second
Grad school doesn’t bother me
“I will Survive”

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From a dark place.
I just walk in and people leave
with love of my research taste
I have changed the way I work
Now I know that was the key
And now I’ll go! Walk out the door
I’m turned around now
Doubt’s not welcome anymore
I used to feel so very hurt that I could cry
I thought I’d crumble
I thought I’d lay down and die
Oh no, not I!
I will survive!
As long as I know how to think
I’ll make it out alive
I’ve got all my life to live
I’ve got all my thoughts to give
And I’ll survive
Hey, hey!
Sources of Help?

Your Advisor
Other Professors you’ve had in class
Trusted resource outside CS
Your Division Director (me)
Questions for Faculty?